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An

Essay on

Gastritis

by

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Preface –

The enjoyment of health uninterruptedly was never one of the many privileges of man — So extensive have been the ravages of disease, that this earth is now become one vast receptacle of the dead — From the time of Adam to this day millions have passed to the final mansion of mortals and yet like slavery though millions have tasted of it, it is the no less bitter on that account — Suffering humanity utter to the physician, cries for relief — 'Tis humiliating to confess, that our art is not so far robbed of its "glorious uncertainties" as to afford to the unfortunate victims of disease more brilliant prospects — Hasten oh time of glorious expectation to that conjuncture, when the materia medica shall be pregnant with means calculated to subdue those maladies, now the scourge of our nature & reproach of our art — Let man die from the burden of old age; life then will be but

a span —

I should willingly feel, the joyful responsibility, which devolves upon those who presume to give lessons, were this essay, a successful attempt at the investigation of some medical fact that now "walketh in darkness" — But this joy of heart, which transcends all description is reserved for those who wield the pen, of more than ordinary talent — The summit of my expectation in the following dissertation, is to give a lucid and faithful record of its subject as collected from authors of acknowledged merit and distinction — Much rather had I glide to the exercise of my profession, in obscurity, than subject myself to the scrutinizing eye of criticism by writing an essay — But to avoid which and graduate is contrary to an inflexible law — For me therefore remains the mournful joy of hope, that its being the production of a juvenile mind, impelled to exertion

from necessity, will so far apologize for its inaccuracies, as to cause oblivion's mantle to shroud them —

Gastritis —

If any disease in methodical nosology demand the particular attention of the student of medicine, on account of the importance of the health of its seat to the well being of the animal oconomy it is indubitably gastritis — Located in an organ, individually possessing a greater number of sympathies perhaps, than every other part of the human fabric collectively, it is natural to infer that it will carry with rapidity to awful eternity the unfortunate sufferer unless bridled by energetic, powerful and efficient means —

Symptoms — Except the cuticle, nails, hair, and hardest part of the teeth, every portion of the body is subject to inflammation — By Dr Cullen, inflammation of the stomach is defined "Pyrexia typhodes; in epigastrio ardor.

et dolor, ingestis quibuslibet auctus; vomendi cupiditas et ingesta protinus rejecta; singultus." To the first part of this definition there is some objection, in as much as the fever in gastritis bears but little similarity to typhus, the general debility and feebleness of the pulse being excepted; and the more marked symptoms of typhus rarely develope themselves — Dr. Cullens definition, however, comprehends the chief symptoms; the stomach is acutely pained, and accompanied with a sense of burning, though the pain is not uniformly fixed to the region of this organ but extends to the false ribs and sometimes shoots to the back — If the mildest articles be received into the stomach such is its morbid irritability that incessant vomiting, a prostration of muscular power and even syncope ensue, the patient complaining of anxiety and anguish at praecordia; the pain is always aggravated by external pressure Hiccup though an occasional is not so constant

a symptom as vomiting — The pulse is frequent contracted, small, more or less hard and occasionally intermitting — Sauvages according to Dr. Philip observes that the pulse is sometimes strong, but this fact we conceive can seldom occur, when the characteristics of this disease are well developed, because of the sympathy that manifestly exists between the stomach and arterial system — The thirst is intolerable; its gratification affords some respite from pain, but is deceptive and transitory — the drink being soon rejected — The bowels are costive and obstinately so, if the inflammation shall have extended to them and the incessant vomiting precludes the possibility of opening them, by the administration of medicine by the mouth — When great prostration of strength with faintings, a short interrupted respiration, cold clammy sweats and hiccups occur with cold extremities and an intermittent pulse, the conjunction is hopeless and the patient soon removed beyond the sphere of earthly trials and tribulations —

The Anomalous Symptoms of gastritis are many — the patient sometimes complains of Dyspnoea, which does not arise as is commonly imagined in consequence of the extension of the inflammation to the lungs, but from the inflammation of the stomach rendering the descent of the diaphragm painful — It is evident that the nearer the inflammation is to the diaphragm, the greater will be the dyspnoea — Another anomalous symptom attending gastritis is hydrophobia — For this symptom it is exceedingly difficult to account though it supervenes to many acute disorders — Gastritis is sometimes attended by convulsions, which arise from irritations of the prima via rather than the disease itself — Besides these, there are many more anomalous symptoms which occur from deluded sympathy as pain and inflammation in the great toe, acute sensation in the groin &c.*

Diagnostic symptoms — The pains of gastritis may possibly though not easily be mistaken for

* [illegible] M.S. [illegible]

other pains of the stomach — The spasms and flatulent pains of this organ, the pulse is natural or so little altered, that if this were the only diagnostic we should seldom err; nor are these pains accompanied by that sudden prostration of muscular power, which attends gastritis — Vomiting in them is not a symptom universally attendant nor is pain and vomiting certainly excited by ingesta — One of the best diagnostic symptoms of gastritis, is the augmentation of pain, when pressure is made on the epigastrium — In these there is no increase of pain from pressure nor is hiccup so constant a symptom — The voice of a patient labouring under gastritis is comparatively free and his cries piercing, whereas in spasm of the stomach there are a suffocation and contraction, amounting oftentimes to a total suppression of voice — It has been considered difficult to distinguish gastritis from an inflammation of the epigastric muscles —

Although the symptoms of the two diseases are so much blended and incorporated as we think them scarcely distinguishable without much difficulty — When the epigastric muscles are called into action, the pain of gastritis is not made greater; but if the inflammation be seated in the muscles by such motion the pain is greatly increased — The pulse in the latter case as in the phlegmasia generally, is strong if at all affected and not small and frequent as in gastritis — Some degree of swelling of the muscles is usually apparent in nearly every case of their inflammation and there is no nausea — Some fulness however is often about the stomach also in "gastritis" — By a quarin according to Mr Philip) it is said a diagnostic between these cases is unimportant, since the practice in them is the same — This observation is not without its error — The greater sympathies of the organ affected by gastritis, impropes us with the necessity of promptly directing effective means to it, lest by the continuance and progress of diseased action such

unrelenting symptoms shall arise as bid defiance to the powers of medicine —

Prognosis — Boerhaave in enumerating the terminations of gastritis says "It uses to terminate like all other inflammatory diseases into health, suppurating, scirrous, cancerous, gangrenous distempers or into sudden death itself, which is hastened by convulsions" — As in the Phlegmasia generally, the tendency of this disease to admit of resolution is known, by its having arisen from a slight cause, the symptoms being moderate and yielding to appropriate remedies in the commencement of the disease — If the symptoms are violent and do not suffer remissions, the period of resolution is generally past within twenty four hours — In less violent cases however, it may take place at a later period when considerable remissions occur —

The tendency to terminate in suppuration is ascertained by the continuance of the symptoms in a moderate degree without any con-

-siderable remission — The existence of an abscess is known by a remission of pain preceded by rigors; but a sense of weight and anxiety about the praecordia remain to harass the patient — When these symptoms occur the pulse is diminished in frequency, but is shortly afterwards again increased with rigors, marked exacerbations in the afternoon and evening, night sweats and other symptoms indicative of hectic fever —

Strong evidence of the tendency to gangrene is offered by the symptoms continuing unsubdued or unmitigated notwithstanding the judicious and well directed practice resorted to, in the early part of the disease; and when begun is indicated by the sudden cessation of pain; by the pulse continuing its frequency but growing weaker; by delirium and other marks of increasing debility — The event of gastritis is seldom favourable; as the patient is usually destroyed by the violence of the attack or else it termi-

-nates in suppuration, ulceration or gangrene. The danger of an imposthume of the stomach must be evident to all. It usually proves fatal unless it burst into the stomach, the matter be discharged by vomiting or stool & the ulcer speedily healed. Notwithstanding the opening of the abscess into the stomach, cases are recorded, in which death took place as a consequence from the ulcer left. These cases sometimes terminate very suddenly by hæmorrhagy. Adhesion sometimes takes place between the stomach and abdominal parietes from inflammation and then the abscess may burst externally.

The termination in gangrene is as unfavourable as can be imagined, for it proves uniformly and speedily fatal. — Its termination in either suppuration or gangrene is an event to be studiously avoided; but of the two evils choose suppuration as the least, for one case is recorded in which the contents of

an abscess were externally discharged, so that it became necessary for the space of nearly three years to keep the opening closed by compresses and bandages — Mankind are exceedingly tenacious of life and submit to sufferings almost intolerable to sustain it — Purulent ascites sometimes originates and proves fatal in consequence of the bursting of an abscess into the abdominal cavity — The modern writers agree generally that Schirrous & Cancer have their origin from a cause different from that of inflammation and are therefore considered by them not the result of inflammation as formerly believed — Dr. Gibson says "As regards the immediate cause of Cancer innumerable hypotheses have been framed — That which approaches nearest to truth, it seems to me, ascribes the disease to animalcular origin or as contended by Adams and Carmichael to the presence of hydatids — thus giving to cancer an independent vitality"

Such is the sympathy that exists between the stomach and other vital organs, that gastritis occasionally seems to prove fatal on this account, or as Cullen observes "from the sensibility of the stomach, and its communication with the rest of the system, it will be obvious that the inflammation of this organ by whatever causes produced, may be attended with fatal consequences. In particular by the great debility, which such an inflammation suddenly produces, it may quickly prove fatal without running the common course of inflammations." And Boerhaave as before said observes that it occasionally causes sudden death with convulsions — Causes of gastritis — The remote predisposing causes of this disease, are the same as in other inflammatory diseases — Among the exciting causes of this disease the application of cold in various ways holds a conspicuous place.

no cause being more frequent than the checking of perspiration from cold drinks — Acrid substances frequently excite this disease and especially when the mucus of the stomach, has been so altered and vitiated as to execute its destined purpose badly; and it is a fact known and acknowledged and deserves to be recollected that those substances most acrid to the taste are not those which when taken into the stomach, excite the greatest irritation. The spices for example though strongly affecting the sense of taste, are frequently received into the stomach without resulting inconvenience, and tartarized Antimony, though quite insipid occasions excrutiant the most violent — All substances however, strongly affecting taste, irritate the stomach in some degree and if used immoderately by the predisposed may excite gastritis — Drastic emetics and Cathartics, have been ranked as causes of this disease and are no doubt the causes occasionally

since they are possessed of irritating powers — The more irritating articles of diet, have also been charged with exciting this disease — The immoderate use of animal food and fermented liquors very readily excites it in the predisposed; and renew it in those lately recovered — Over distention applies a very hurtful irritation to the stomach — Mechanical causes frequently produce this disease — as a blow on the epigastric region, a wound of the stomach or some contiguous parts, the pressure of the ensiform cartilage from dislocation or fracture — When gastritis arises from inflammation of the neighboring parts it is symptomatic — I have now enumerated the chief occasional causes of gastritis — Malignant fevers are so frequently accompanied with gastritis and enteritis that we are induced to suppose their cause to attack the stomach primarily & perpetrate locally its deleterious effect — In eruptive

fever it occasionally supervenes on the sudden recession of the eruption and probably soon runs into gangrene — an event confirmed by the great debility that attends and post Mortem examinations

Treatment of gastritis — Usually the indications are very obvious in a disease so violent and affecting so important a viscus — In the treatment of the phlegmasia, venesection is the sheet anchor of hope and in no case is it carried to a greater extent than in gastritis — As soon as its symptoms are developed the lancet should be drawn from its case and a quantity of blood taken, proportionate to their severity or carried as far as the habit will bear, and the smaller and weaker the pulse provided the disease is idiopathic, informs us that early and copious bleeding is the more necessary. By Dr Caldwell the annotator of Cullen's first lines, blood

is directed to be drawn to considerable extent in small and frequently repeated bleedings, but by professor Chapman copiously — Bloodletting in ordinary cases is called into requisition to diminish the strength of the pulse, but in this instance it is employed to increase it and its efficacy is proportionate to the degree of increase of strength and diminution of hardness of the pulse — A correct discrimination should therefore be made between a strong and a hard pulse — language cannot convey too forcibly the importance of early bloodletting in this disease. The circulation sometimes in the course of a few hours becomes so languid as to render it impossible to detract the requisite quantity of blood — the patient falling a sacrifice to a disease originally controllable by bold, resolute and decisive practice — After copious

venesection the symptoms of gastritis totally disappear, but the cessation is transitory and a recurrence of the disease almost always happens — The repetition of venesection must be regulated as in the phlegmasiæ generally — the less the remission after the first bleeding, the sooner must it be repeated and to the greater extent — Evacuations by the bowels must be solicited by cathartic glysters, and not by the exhibition of purgatives by the mouth, which by exciting vomiting would aggravate every symptom of the disease — To this as to all general rules there are exceptions. Overdistention of stomach is sometimes the cause of gastritis and in this case the patient is tormented with incessant ineffectual efforts to vomit — The load it is evident must be removed — Under such circumstances emetics and cathartics taken by the mouth are the only effectual means; but as a hurtful irritation would be excited in the stomach by the exhibition of

an emetic, the cathartic only is admissible, & still farther to solicit the due action of the stomach, the bowels should be excited by physics — By these means a part of the stomach's contents will pass into the intestines and the remainder expelled by vomiting — In all cases as soon as the disquietude of the stomach shall be allayed, calomel should be administered — Calomel is preferable to all purgatives as it is less irritating, insipid, and of considerable specific gravity. It should be administered in pill —

When this disease has been excited by acrid or poisonous substances received into the stomach, we must also give medicines by the mouth — If its specific corrector or counteragent be unknown we must endeavour to promote the vomiting by a combination of Emetic tartar with Ipecac or with the sulphate of Copper — The doses should be large:

as the susceptibility of the stomach is almost destroyed in those cases where a narcotic poison has been swallowed. — Even large doses will sometimes fail to produce the desired effect. We may perhaps succeed by distending the stomach with warm water: applying cataplasms of tobacco to the scrobiculus cordis, tickling the fauces with a feather or an injection of tartar emetic. — These resources failing we should have recourse to professor Physick's instrument for pumping out the offending matter; and if we can have access to it we should think it proper in the first instance Cathartic medicines in the form of pills, should be administered in those cases where the poison has been so long swallowed as to warrant the belief that it has passed into the intestines. — Clysters are good adjuvants, for while they relieve the lower bowels, they tend by sympathy to

increase the peristaltic motion of the whole alimentary canal — Mild mucilaginous enemata are useful in when diarrhoea is an attendant, for they allay irritation & expel any offending matter the intestines may hold — Local blood-letting though so frequently resorted to in the phlegmasia generally is seldom resorted to in gastritis, but it may be employed in this with the same good effect and is peculiarly adapted to those symptomatic cases in which general blood-letting is inadmissible or at least an ambiguous remedy — It should be always made accessory unless general blood-letting proves suddenly effectual — Blisters to the epigastrium are more frequently employed than local blood-letting and produce results the most pleasing, if applied after the hardness of the pulse has abated in consequence

of the diligent use of the lancet. Fomentations to the abdomen though feeble remedies, conduce to comfort the patient and should be used. The warm bath deserves more notice as a remedy; it excites perspiration, composes the patient, calms the stomach and causes centrifugal determination. The thirst in this disease as before stated is very urgent. The patient should be allowed simple water lime water and new milk to quiet irritability, a thin mucilage of gum arabic, sweet milk diluted with twice its quantity of water or some mild acidulous fluid. The drinks should be taken in small quantity & frequently repeated; even these mild articles will be frequently rejected, notwithstanding the extreme caution observed in their exhibition.

When indications of approaching gangrene are visible we must rely on

opium, which in this and other cases has a tendency to oppose the occurrence of gangrene. If opium fails, Prof. Chapman confidently recommends the use of the spirits terebinthine. It is no doubt an important remedy, when judiciously used —

The duration of the disease renders an attention to diet necessary, and should be regulated on the same principle as drink — An abstinence from food during the first days of the disease is desirable; but when it continues longer it is necessary to support the patient by some mild preparation —

Opium or its preparations so frequently used to allay vomiting should be carefully avoided in this disease till the advanced stage, when the violence of the disease is

broken by evacuations — Anodyne glysters and even mild opiates by the mouth (the bowels being attended to) under such circumstances allay the vomiting and abridge the disease — The objection to Opium in the first stage is its power to increase the vis a tergo; but when the pulse is reduced and consequently but little hardness remaining as in the second stage, the objection ceases —

The temperature of the patients room should be moderate and uniform —

When gastric Suppurations supervene on the sudden recession of eruptions, the means of recalling them so far as the nature of the disease admits should constitute a part of the practice — When the symptoms of suppuration appear, medicine can be of little further use and

if the patient is saved it is by the accidental seat of the abscess— If it opens into the stomach, irritating articles of diet must be avoided till the ulcer is healed— When by its bursting an ulcer is formed externally, it should be treated surgically— Gangrene of the stomach is always fatal—

To the professors of this university, I feel grateful for the information derived from their lectures— that they may fill their chairs with the same credit as heretofore and enjoy health & happiness is the sincere wish of— the author—